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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7941

INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 0235

RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE 0935

RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON 0785

RUEHLU/AMEMBASSY LUANDA 0410

RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 0156

RUEHTO/AMEMBASSY MAPUTO 0445

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 DAKAR 000683

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR INL, AF/W, AF/RSA, DRL/AE, WHA/BSC AND S/P

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/26/2017

TAGS: PGOV SNAR PREL EFIN PU

SUBJECT: GUINEA BISSAU: NO CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT, HIGH CONFIDENCE IN DRUGS

Classified By: Ambassador Janice L. Jacobs for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) A vote of no confidence leaves President Joao Bernardo &Nino8 Vieira with some tough choices but no clear timeframe for having to make them. The crisis will indefinitely stall the security sector reform initiative, not to mention much needed social and economic reforms. Drug money may have played a major role in the attempt to shake up the government but among the international community, there is still no unified or concerted effort to confront traffickers. The military is staying behind the scenes and Bissau is peaceful, but given the Defense Minister and the Chief of the Armed forces, increasing power and drug money, the military is surely deeply involved. Please see action requests in paragraphs 14 and 15. END SUMMARY.

NO CONFIDENCE

¶2. (C) The no confidence vote in the National Popular Assembly (ANP) on March 19 left President Vieira with three choices: to accept a new government headed by the Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC) )- the party that expelled him; dissolve the assembly, which would require new elections within 90 days; or ignore the vote and continue with the current government. Vieira appears to be leaning toward the third option, asking the ANP to clarify the meaning of its vote.

¶3. (C) Vieira told the Ambassador that he was consulting with the Supreme Court to analyze his legal options. He would prefer to ignore the no confidence vote if he receives the court's backing that to do so is constitutional. He followed a similar course of action when he removed former Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Jr. of the PAIGC and replaced him with the current Prime Minister, Aristides Gomes. The PAIGC brought the case to the Supreme Court which declined to issue a ruling, stating it was a political, not legal matter.

¶4. (C) If Vieira dissolves the ANP, the GOGB has no money for new elections. The only possible donor that may support such a move would be China, although the newly appointed Chinese Ambassador did not mention that it was a consideration when he met with the Ambassador on March 21. In any event, parliamentary elections are scheduled for spring 2008; so a new Assembly would be short-lived.

¶5. (C) The decision may not be Vieira,s to make. Foreign Minister Antonio Isaac Monteiro told the Ambassador that the no confidence vote had been purchased with drug money. Others echoed this opinion and pointed to Defense Minister Helder Proenca as a possible replacement for the Prime Minister. In Bissau, Proenca is widely believed to be a drug kingpin. Like Vieira, Proenca was also expelled from the PAIGC, which according to the censure, would have the right to appoint the new Prime Minister. Since the no confidence vote, he has been in talks with the party, possibly paving the way for his return. He is also continuing to coordinate closely with Chief of Defense General Batista Tagme Na Waie, also widely believed to be important for drug traffickers. Whatever is the next step to resolve the current crisis, it will certainly benefit Proenca and Tagme who seem to be emerging as the two strongest men in the country.

¶6. (C) A donor,s contact group meeting on March 26 in Lisbon was scheduled to address how Guinea-Bissau and international donors could jump-start the security sector reform initiative. The meeting will still take place, but the agenda has changed. Now only the internal crisis will be discussed.

DRUGS

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¶7. (C) The Ambassador told the President, Defense Minister Proenca, General Tagme Na Waie, Naval Chief Jose Americo Bubo Na Tchuto, and the press that the United States would suspend training for high level military officials because of information linking the military to drug trafficking. Mostly, the message was met with little surprise and comments

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about poverty and lack of means to fight trafficking. Two notable exceptions, Foreign Minister Monteiro and Interior Minister Dionsio Cabi were refreshingly candid about the vast influence and effect of drugs in Guinea-Bissau.

¶8. (C) Monteiro said the U.S. and other donors are too late in the fight against drugs in Guinea-Bissau. "Some of us will have to die," he said of his fellow advocates in Guinea-Bissau of fighting drug traffickers. His concern of sniper fire at night in a city with almost no street lights was hauntingly detailed. He urged the Ambassador to look at the connections being made abroad but did not elaborate.

¶9. (C) Among the foreign missions in Guinea-Bissau, there does not seem to be a united, concerted effort to confront drug trafficking. Ambassador Franco Nulli, the European Union Delegate, which is the single largest donor, expressed only passing concern when prompted and did not know if Guinea-Bissau had been mentioned for a Dublin Group. He said Spain and France might be engaged bilaterally on the issue. Nulli said the EU is still focused on security sector reform, which requires close cooperation and assistance with the military. Perhaps not surprisingly, China,s Ambassador had no interest in the topic when raised by the Ambassador.

¶10. (C) Brazil's Ambassador, on the contrary, expressed significant concern about drug trafficking. He noted that it would be useful if Presidents Lula and Bush discussed the topic at their upcoming March meeting in Washington. He told the Ambassador he would send a cable to Brasilia urging inclusion of the topic in Lula,s talking points.

¶11. (C) Among the donors, the U.S. appears to be taking the lead in raising concerns about drug trafficking. After the Ambassador's strong statement to the press at the Navy headquarters with Navy Chief and reputed trafficker Na Tchuto in the background, five people called post's FSN in Bissau the next day to congratulate the Ambassador on her courage. The State Secretary for Cooperation was among them, stating that other countries needed to follow the U.S. lead and add their voice for support.

COMMENT AND ACTION REQUESTS

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¶12. (C) The no confidence vote is in part the Government's own doing and also the result of intense jockeying for government jobs. Prime Minister Gomes is an arrogant and ineffectual leader who has refused to meet with opposition parties, has allowed corruption to spiral out of control, and caused major losses with his failed cashew export policies. Under his watch, the World Bank has lost confidence in Guinea-Bissau for attempting to unethically award a lucrative contract for infrastructure improvement to a Nigerian firm. However, the vote also shows the determination of some factions of divided PAIGC and Party for Social Renewal (PRS) to get government jobs and probably a piece of the drug money. The factionalization of the PRS took on new dimensions since former president Kumba Yala won that party's leadership race. Even though he has since returned to his residence in Morocco, Yala's proxy in Bissau, Sori Djalo, was a major force behind the so called "stability pact" that led to the no confidence vote.

¶13. (C) Whatever the reasons, it is worth noting that the process has been peaceful and constitutional. Political enemies have been trying to destroy the government almost since Vieira took office in October 2005, but they have generally remained within the confines of the law to do so.

¶14. (C) Action Request One: Monteiro asked to travel to Washington to meet with high level officials to talk more about drug trafficking and request assistance. Request INL A/S Patterson and others as appropriate agree to meet with him.

¶15. (C) Action Request Two: Please also take necessary steps to include the topic of drug trafficking in talking points for President Lula's visit. While this topic is not covered in the trilateral agreement, the signing ceremony would be a good opportunity to raise the issue of drug trafficking and

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open the possibility of including it in future coordinated activities. END COMMENT AND ACTION REQUESTS.

¶16. (U) Visit Embassy Dakar's SIPRNET site at  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/af/dakar>.  
JACOBS